

Overview of the Maryland Threat Alert System and Guidance for Citizens, Businesses, and Schools

Maryland Emergency Management Agency
Office of Domestic Preparedness
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[HTTP://WWW.MARYLANDHOMELANDSECURITY.US](http://www.marylandhomelandsecurity.us)

Maryland Threat Alert System

A. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the Maryland Threat Alert System (M-TAS), how it is used, and recommended actions by parties upon receipt at each level.

B. Overview

Every incident is different. There may or may not be warning of a potential WMD incident. Factors involved range from intelligence gathered from various law enforcement or intelligence agency sources, public health data, and emergency calls to an actual notification from the terrorist organization or individual. The alert level will be determined after appropriate analysis upon approval of the Governor as advised by MEMA.

The warning or notification of a potential WMD terrorist incident could come from many sources; therefore, open communication with schools, businesses and the community is critical.

C. Concept of Operations

1. *Direction and Control*

- There are five Alert Levels, each identified by a description and corresponding color.
- The higher the Alert Level, the greater the risk of a terrorist attack. Risk includes both the probability of an attack occurring and its potential gravity.
- Alert Levels shall be assigned by the Director, Maryland Emergency Management Agency (Director) in consultation with the appropriate officials.
- Alert Levels may be assigned for the entire State, or they may be set for a particular geographic area or infrastructure sector.
- Assigned Alert Levels shall be reviewed at regular intervals to determine whether adjustments are warranted.

2. *Explanation of Alert System*

- **Low Condition (Green).** This condition is declared when there is a low risk of terrorist attacks.
- **Guarded Condition (Blue).** This condition is declared when there is a general risk of terrorist attacks.
- **Elevated Condition (Yellow).** An Elevated Condition is declared when there is a significant risk of terrorist attacks.

- **High Condition (Orange).** A High Condition is declared when there is a high risk of terrorist attacks.
- **Severe Condition (Red).** A Severe Condition reflects a severe risk of terrorist attacks. Under most circumstances, the Protective Measures for a Severe Condition are not intended to be sustained for substantial periods of time.

3. Public Information

Three systems exist to advise businesses, schools and the general public: EAS, the Maryland Homeland Security Website, and the Media. These systems will be used by the State and your local emergency management office to provide you information as quickly as possible. Currently, the information structure is:

	Notification Method by Level		
	Website	Media	EAS / NOAA
Green	X	O	-
Blue	X	O	-
Yellow	X	X	-
Orange	X	X	O
Red	X	X	X

X= Required, O=Optional

4. Recommended Actions

Recommended actions have been developed by category for each threat level. When an advisory is issued, recommended actions will be provided for consideration. Please see the following tabs depending on you area of interest:

- Citizen – Tab A
- Business – Tab B
- Schools – Tab C

TAB A: Citizen Actions

<i>Threat Level</i>	<i>Recommended Courses of Action</i>
SEVERE (Red)	<i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to radio/TV for current information/instructions • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities immediately • Contact business to determine status of work day • Adhere to any travel restrictions announced by local governmental authorities • Be prepared to shelter in place or evacuate if instructed to do so by local governmental authorities • Provide volunteer services only as requested
HIGH (Orange)	<i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities • Review your personal disaster plan • Exercise caution when traveling • Have shelter in place materials on hand and review procedure in Terrorism: Preparing for the Unexpected brochure • If a need is announced, donate blood at designated blood collection center • Prior to volunteering, contact agency to determine their needs
ELEVATED (Yellow)	<i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities • Ensure disaster supplies kit is stocked and ready • Check telephone numbers and e-mail addresses in your personal communication plan and update as necessary • Develop alternate routes to/from work/school and practice them • Continue to provide volunteer services
GUARDED (Blue)	<i>Complete recommended actions at lower level</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities • Review stored disaster supplies and replace items that are outdated • Develop emergency communication plan with family/neighbors/friends • Provide volunteer services and take advantage of additional volunteer training opportunities
LOW (Green)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain copy of Terrorism: Preparing for the Unexpected brochure from your local Red Cross chapter • Develop a personal disaster plan and disaster supplies kit using Red Cross brochures Your Family Disaster Plan and Your Family Disaster Supplies Kit • Examine volunteer opportunities in you community; choose an agency to volunteer with and receive initial t raining • Take a Red Cross CPR/AED and first aid courses

Information provided by American Red Cross

TAB B: Businesses

<i>Threat Level</i>	<i>Recommended Courses of Action</i>
SEVERE (Red)	<p><i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to radio/TV for current information/instructions • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities immediately • Work with local community leaders, emergency management, government agencies, community organizations, and utilities to meet immediate needs of the community • Determine need to close business based on circumstances and in accordance with written emergency plan • Be prepared to work with a dispersed or smaller work force • Ensure mental health counselors available for employees
HIGH (Orange)	<p><i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities • Review emergency plans to include continuity of operations and media materials • Determine need to restrict access to business or provide private security firm support/reinforcement • Contact vendors/suppliers to confirm their emergency response plan procedures • If a need is announced, contact nearest blood collection agency and offer to organize a blood drive
ELEVATED (Yellow)	<p><i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities • Contact private security firm for security risk assessment and to determine availability of support/reinforcement • Contact voluntary organizations you support to determine how you can provide assistance in case of emergency
GUARDED (Blue)	<p><i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities • Dialogue with community leaders, emergency management, government agencies, community organizations and utilities about disaster preparedness • Ensure emergency communication plan updated to include purchase of needed • Ask the local Red Cross chapter to provide a “Terrorism: Preparing for the Unexpected” presentation at your workplace for employees
LOW (Green)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Red Cross Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry to develop written emergency plans to address all hazards. Include an emergency communication plan to notify employees of activities; designate an off-site ‘report to’ location in case of evacuation. • Develop continuity of operations plan to include designating alternate work facility/location for business • Arrange for staff to take a Red Cross CPR/AED and first aid course • Obtain copies of Terrorism: Preparing for the Unexpected and Preparing Your Business for the Unthinkable brochures from your local Red Cross chapter for distribution to all employees/management as appropriate.

Information provided by American Red Cross

TAB C: Schools

<i>Threat Level</i>	<i>Recommended Courses of Action</i>
SEVERE (Red)	<p><i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to radio/TV for current information/instructions • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities immediately • Close school if recommended to do so by appropriate authorities • 100% identification check (i.e. -driver's license retained at front office) and escort of anyone entering school other than students, staff and faculty • Continue offering lessons from Masters of Disaster "Facing Fear: Helping Young People Deal with Terrorism and Tragic Events" curriculum • Ensure mental health counselors available for students, staff and faculty
HIGH (Orange)	<p><i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities • Review emergency plans • Offer Masters of Disaster "Facing Fear: Helping Young People Deal with Terrorism and Tragic Events" lessons in grades K-12 • Prepare to handle inquiries from anxious parents and media • Discuss children's fears concerning possible terrorist attacks
ELEVATED (Yellow)	<p><i>Complete recommended actions at lower levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to the proper authorities • Ensure all emergency supplies stocked and ready • Obtain copies of Terrorism: Preparing for the Unexpected brochure from your local Red Cross chapter and send it home with students in grades K-12, staff and faculty
GUARDED (Blue)	<p><i>Complete recommended actions at lower level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities • Conduct safety training/emergency drills following the school's written emergency plan for all grades • Ensure emergency communication plan updated and needed equipment is purchased • Continue offering lessons from 'Masters of Disaster' curriculum for grades K-8 regarding emergency preparedness for natural disasters
LOW (Green)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Red Cross Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry to develop written emergency plans to address all hazards. Include an emergency communication plan to notify employees of activities; designate an off-site 'report to' location in case of evacuation. • Initiate offering American red Cross "Masters of Disaster" curriculum for grades K-8 regarding emergency preparedness for natural disasters • Ensure selected staff members take a CPR/AED and first aid course

Information provided by American Red Cross